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## ***Governor O'Bannon's inaugural address***

What a day! Hoosiers as far as the eye can see – all braving the cold, to be part of this celebration of our state, our spirit and hopes, Indiana's rich legacy and the destiny we will guide together over the next four years. I am honored and humbled today that you have entrusted me with our future. In accepting your public trust, my challenge is to bring out the best in our state – the best in us – as we move forward, into the next great century.

I hope that we will all remember this day as a day of new beginnings. I hope we'll remember that we came together this cold day in January to build a new future – forged from the spirit and the sweat and hard work of those who came before us. Let us never forget that our shared values – our sacred values, our love of Indiana – united us as Hoosiers. Let us always remember that what unites us is stronger than any differences.

I remember growing up in Corydon in Southern Indiana. Just a small town like a lot of other towns in our state – except it also happened to be the home of our state's first Capitol. And many days I'd walk past the old stone building in the square. I'd look at that place where the earliest Hoosiers formed our first government. Where they first brought our communities together. And wrote our state's constitution. And I realized something. Our state government wasn't this building. It was the people in the building. People like us.

Now I see there are a lot of fourth graders here today. Let me hear how many of you here today are fourth graders. Well, I know this is the first year you study Indiana history in school. And I want you to remember that history – just like government – isn't just about places and dates. It's about people: People like you and me. And I want to tell you how it was back in Corydon 180 years ago, because I think we can learn something.

The year was 1816. It was a hot day in early June – just the opposite of how it is today. The air was thick and heavy with the start of summer. No such thing as air conditioning. And 43 men crowded into the stone capitol to hammer out a document. A constitution that would guide the future of our state even today.

Now the fact that they could get 43 Hoosier politicians to agree on anything was an accomplishment. But they did agree and some of the very first words they wrote were these: That all power is inherent in the people . . . That all power is inherent in the people." In other words, it is the people's government. That, as Abraham Lincoln, a former Hoosier, said, it is a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

My friends, those early Hoosiers were pretty smart. Because that's why we're here today. To begin once again the people's government. You've given me your public trust. Entrusted me with our state's future. And I promise you I won't let you down. Because what I want for our state is something that I believe we all want: to make Indiana the best a place on earth to live, work and raise a family.

We are fortunate that we have a strong foundation to build on. A foundation carefully constructed over the last eight years. We have a thriving economy. Good jobs. More people working. A state surplus that's one of the largest in the country. This is the legacy of my partner and good friend, Evan Bayh. We salute him today, and I look forward to working with him to build our future for many years to come.

And thanks to Governor Bob Orr and Governor Otis Bowen, with whom I also served, for their leadership as Indiana moved forward.

But we know there is more to do. And as we meet the challenges of the future, I'll look to the values I grew up with in Corydon. A belief in family, faith and community. A belief that opportunity and responsibility go hand in hand. And an optimism for the future.

Above all, a commitment to family means that our young people and their needs come first. Education is the key to our future. And every action we take in this building behind us ought to pass a simple test: Does it better prepare our children and our grandchildren for tomorrow?

No one says that our work will be easy. But I can honestly say that there is no job in the world that I would rather have.

My wife Judy and I want to thank you and many of our fellow Hoosiers for sharing your lives with us. Over the years, we have truly seen the Hoosier spirit – alive and well – in every part of our state. We saw it in the second grade classroom that invited me to join them in the pledge of allegiance to the flag – in French. We saw it at the Christa McAuliffe alternative school that's turning dropouts into achievers. And at the Thomas Edison school that's "smart-wired" for technology unthinkable even 10 years ago.

I am convinced today, more than ever, that the future is bright. Our spirit is rekindled and our state is moving forward. And as I stand here today, looking to the future, I'm reminded of the words of George Bernard Shaw. He said:

I am convinced that my life belongs to the whole community. And as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. The harder I work, the more I live. Life is no brief candle for me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I got hold of for a moment. And I want to make it burn as brightly as I can before turning it over to future generations."

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for entrusting this new administration with this adventure. We will do our best to live up to the faith you've placed in us. The faith that together we can keep moving forward. And we will never forget that this government belongs to all of us. It is our challenge – together – to make the torch flame burn brightly. And to light the way for a brighter future for all our families. Thank you.